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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: QUORUM QUESTION CONTINUES TO COMPLICATE
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

REF: A. ANKARA 916

[1](#)B. 06 ANKARA 6723

Classified By: PolCouns Janice G. Weiner, reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Turkey's parliament will convene Friday, April 27, at 3pm to begin the first round of the presidential election process. The opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) is standing firm on its threat to boycott. If the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) fails to muster 367 deputies to attend the first round (reftels), CHP has promised to appeal to the Constitutional Court, whose chief judge yesterday reiterated her pledge to rule on the matter within two days. In the event of an appeal:

--Should the court find that the Constitution requires a quorum of 367 (two-thirds -- the number necessary to elect a president in the first round -- vice the routine one-third, or 184), the presidential election would be invalidated and Turkey would go immediately to general elections, which can be accomplished in as short as a 45-day window. President Sezer would remain in place until the new parliament elects the president.

--Should the court rule against CHP, the presidential election process will proceed in parliament.

[1](#)2. (C) CHP leadership remains stubbornly convinced that it is in the right. Derailing first Erdogan and now Gul has become their Holy Grail, as a conversation with CHP vice chair Sinan Yerlikaya made clear. A number of disgruntled and disgusted CHPers are considering exiting from politics, in part because of the party's obsessive anti-AKP populist course and refusal to offer constructive alternatives. Non-party affiliated think tank contacts tell us it is a stretch to assume the constitution would require different quorums for different rounds of presidential voting, but hope the issue goes to the Constitutional Court to decide it once and for all.

[1](#)3. (C) Everyone is playing for votes: Gul is courting independents and small opposition parties. One CHP MP resigned today, headed to the center-right True Path Party (DYP); an AKP MP resigned as well. While several CHPers may break ranks and attend tomorrow's first round vote, whether or not the election goes to the Constitutional Court will depend on independents (9 MPs), and small opposition parties ANAVATAN (20) and DYP (4 or 5). DYP and ANAVATAN must decide

by tomorrow whether to boycott or attend the first round. Their calculation will be based on whether they believe they will fare better in early elections or in elections held later. Of all the parties, it appears to us that, today, only AKP is really ready for a national vote.

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